

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 VO-03 SCA-01 IO-10 NEA-09 SAJ-01 SY-05

NIC-01 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /092 W

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P R 171656Z MAR 75

FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 648

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 521

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, WB, GW, UR CZ, PL

SUBJECT: CONTROVERSY ABOUT SOVIET BLOC VISA PRACTICES
IN BERLIN

REF: USBERLIN 284 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: PUBLIC'S INTEREST (AND APPARENTLY SENAT'S ALSO) IN PROCEDURES OF EAST EUROPEAN MILITARY MISSIONS AND LOCAL TRAVEL AGENCIES WITH RESPECT TO DESCRIPTIONS OF "NATIONALITY" OF WEST BERLINERS ON VISA APPLICATIONS HAS RECEDED. WE ARE ADVISED BY BRITISH, HOWEVER, THAT THEY HAVE LEARNED FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER MAY SEEK TO RAISE SUBJECT DURING HIS VISIT TO PRAGUE MARCH 24-25, AND THAT FRG MAY ACCORDINGLY WISH PRELIMINARY DICUSSION IN BONN GROUP. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE ALLIES SHOULD DONW-PLAY ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

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2. SINCE REFTTEL, NEWSPAPERS, WHICH BROKE ORIGINAL STORY,

HAVE HAD THEIR INTEREST DIVERTED BY WEIGHTIER ISSUES INCLUDING ELECTIONS AND LORENZ KIDNAPPING. SENAT AS CONSEQUENCE HAS APPARENTLY FELT ITSELF UNDER LESS PRESSURE TO PURSUE ISSUE. WE HAVE RECEIVED LITTLE IN WAY OF ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION OF ALLEGED PRACTICES AND NO FORMAL REQUEST FOR ACTION. SENAT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THAT TRAVEL AGENCIES ARE INSERTING ON APPLICATIONS FOR VISAS TO SOVIET UNION OBJECTIONABLE PHRASE "CITIZEN OF INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ENTITY OF WESTBERLIN."

3. THERE REMAINS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR EMOTIONALISM IN THIS ISSUE, MANY OTHERWISE LEVEL-HEADED BERLINERS QUERYING "HOW CAN THEY TAKE OUR GERMANNES AWAY FROM US?" WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS IN ALLIED INTERESTS TO DOWNPLAY AFFAIRS. SPECIFICALLY, WE HAVE SOUGHT TO DISCOURAGE SENAT FROM PROVOCATIVE PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND HAVE INDICATED THAT WHILE SENAT SHOULD FEEL FREE TO APPROACH TRAVEL AGENCIES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, IT SHOULD NEITHER IMPLY THAT ALLIES WERE PREPARED TO TAKE SANCTIONS NOR RAISE MATTER DIRECTLY WITH CZECHS, POLES OR SOVIETS. SENAT HAS IN TURN INDICATED IT IS RELUCTANT TO MAKE INQUIRY OF TRAVEL AGENCIES WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO REFER TO BK/O (62)5, WHICH GIVES SENAT POWER (UPON ALLIED AUTHORIZATION) TO CLOSE DOWN BUSINESSES WHICH ARE SEEKING TO DAMAGE ESSENTIAL POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF CITY. SENAT APPARENTLY IS UNABLE TO DOCUMENT MORE SERIOUS CHARGES WITH RESPECT TO TRAVEL AGENCY PRACTICES ON SOVIET VISA APPLICATIONS (WHICH HAVE IN ANY EVENT NOT BEEN PUBLICIZED. HELIOS, HOWEVER, WHICH SPECIALIZES IN EE TRAVEL, INDICATES IN PRINTED INSTRUCTION THAT WESTBERLIN SHOULD BE SHOWN AS NATIONALITY IN APPLYING FOR CZECH AND POLISH VISAS.

4. SHOULD FRG RAISE ISSUE IN BONN GROUP, WE WOULD SUGGEST STRESSING POSITIVE ASPECTS OF TRAVEL BY WEST BERLINERS TO EAST BLOCK STATES WHICH, SINCE QA, INVOLVE USE OF BERLINER AUSWEIS, WHICH SAYS "NATIONALITY: GERMAN," AS WELL AS FRG PASSPORT. AT SAME TIME IT MIGHT BE NOTED THAT LANGUAGE APPARENTLY USED AT LEAST BY CZECHS AND POLES IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH

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TERMINOLOGY IN QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT AND THAT VISA APPLICATION FORM IS IN ANY EVENT INTERNAL DOCUMENT OF GOVERNMENT ISSUING VISA. ACCORDINGLY WE DO NOT FAVOR ANY DISCUSSION BY ALLIES WITH EASTERN EUROPEAN MISSIONS IN BERLIN ON THIS MATTER AND ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT POSITIVE RESULTS OF GENSCHER'S RAISING IT IN PRAGUE.

6 FOR EMBASSY INFORMATION WE REPRODUCE BELOW CONTINGENCY

PRESS STATEMENT WHICH WAS INFORMALLY AGREED BY MISSIONS
BUT WHICH HAS NOT BEEN USED SINCE SENAT HAS NOT MADE
FORMAL REQUEST FOR ALLIED INTERVENTION AND PUBLIC
INTEREST, FOR MOMENT AT LEAST, HAS DIED DOWN.

BEGIN TEXT: OUR ATTENTION HAS BEEN DRAWN TO REPORTED
DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING THE VISA-APPLICATION PROCEDURES
EMPLOYED BY THE SOVIET UNION AND SOME EASTERN EUROEPAN
COUNTRIES FOR THE ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO WEST BERLINERS.
A VISA APPLICATION FORM IS AN INTERNAL DOCUMENT OF THE
COUNTRY ISSUING THE VISA. LANGUAGE WHICH IT CONTAINS OR
OMITS CANNOT AFFECT THE STATUS OF THE APPLICANT. THE
QUQDRIPARTITE AGREEMENT INCLUDES AN IMPORTANT PROVISION
FOR TRAVEL BY WEST BERLINERS TO AND IN THE SOVIET UNION,
NAMELY THAT A WEST BERLINERS MAY USE AN FRG PASSPORT.
THIS PROVISION IS WORKING EFFECTIVELY NOT ONLY WITH
THE SOVIET UNION BUT WITH OTHER EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.
END TEXT.GEORGE

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